

**Lessons for The Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost August 23, 2026**

*Psalm 138 ~ David praised God for his faithful love and prayed that all the kings of the earth might praise God.*

*Isaiah 51:1-6 ~ God's saving power promised to Abraham and Sarah is still extended to us today.*

*Romans 11:33 - 12:8 ~ We cannot understand God's ways, but He renews our minds to embrace His will.*

*Matthew 16:13-20 ~ With faith revealed by the Father, Peter confessed Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God.*

**GATHERING THE TEXTS:** What Does it Take to Know God?

God makes himself known through his actions. God's blessing of a nation and a name to Abraham and Sarah gave evidence of His saving power to His people of all time. To Peter and the rest of the disciples God revealed his Son, Jesus, who by the power of the living God, prevails over the gates of hell. It takes God's self-revelation by the power of his Spirit for us to know the depths of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God.

**PRAYER BEFORE THE SERVICE:** Lord, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Moses, you have called me to do some special work for you. Today let me see you at least a little more clearly, so I may follow you more nearly in your will. Amen.

**STEWARDSHIP THOUGHT:** The everlasting arms of God uphold His Church more surely than the wealth and the ways of this world. When we use the things of this world in service to God, they are transformed according to His will.

**OFFERING PRAYER:** God of grace and mercy, in Your pledge to Abraham  
And in Your mercy to Your people, we have known You.  
In the life of Jesus, we have seen Your mighty hand.  
May we reach out to share Your love in what we say and do. Amen.

**CONVICTION AND COMFORT:** Sometimes when we go with the crowds, we fail to confess that Jesus is the Son of the Living God in our presence. Neither all our words nor all our actions conform to the standards of the new community of faith, but Jesus has given faithful witness that the power of His life has overcome the forces of death. He binds us to himself for eternity and renews our hearts and minds to live for Him in this age.

**Questions to Consider:** It is all about identity.

- How has the world gotten it wrong when it comes to who Jesus is?
- How did Peter (and the rest) get it right? . . . how were they able to get it right?
- Why can you embrace God's will even when you don't understand his ways?
- How do we tell the world (make our confession) who Jesus is?